

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

July 2, 2018

The Honorable Peter O'Rourke  
Acting Secretary  
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
810 Vermont Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20420

Dear Acting Secretary O'Rourke:

Our nation has a sacred obligation to America's service members, veterans, and their families. Furthermore, it is the responsibility of the federal government to ensure those who have put their lives on the line in defense of our great nation have proper access to the full array of benefits, services, and supports promised to them. Keeping this in mind, we write to ask that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) prioritize the need for holistic support services to ensure a successful transition from military service into the civilian workforce.

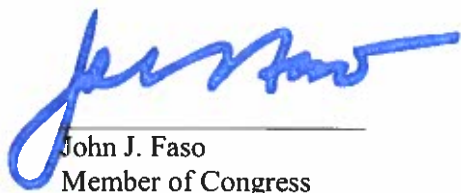
With generous education benefits such as the Post-9/11 GI Bill and the continued implementation of the recently enacted Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017 ("Forever GI Bill"), it is imperative that the VA make supporting veterans and their family members using VA educational benefits a priority. As you are aware, over the past decade, the VA has faced significant challenges in delivering high-quality, timely benefits and healthcare to all eligible and enrolled veterans. Often overlooked as a critical concern to both servicemembers and veterans is attaining a post-secondary education using their VA benefits.

Half of all servicemembers transitioning out of the military today attain a post-secondary education. Since the implementation of the post 9/11 GI bill in 2009, nearly 800,000 veterans and their family members have received educational benefits amounting to more than \$20 billion. Thousands more have received educational benefits from other programs such as the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment program.

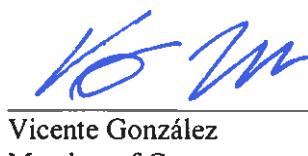
It is imperative that those who have served our country have access to high-quality schools that lead to a viable career. Unfortunately, too many veterans are exploited and not able to take full advantage of their education benefits. We must work to ensure that our veterans can get the education they need to support their goals and families. This will promote a strong return on investment not just for the students, but for the American taxpayer.

The investments our country makes by educating veterans have a substantial impact on our nation's future. Service-affiliated individuals are among the most successful students in higher education today, bringing a unique skill set to the classroom and ultimately to the American workforce. We ask that VA leadership continue to protect student veterans and help them access and utilize their education benefits to the fullest extent. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

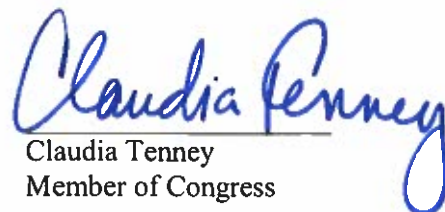
Sincerely,



John J. Faso  
Member of Congress



Vicente González  
Member of Congress



Claudia Tenney  
Member of Congress